United Nations E/CN.18/2004/12

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 March 2004

Original: English

**United Nations Forum on Forests**
**Fourth session**
Geneva, 3-14 May 2004
Item 5 (e) of the provisional agenda*
**Common items for each session: intersessional work**

## Proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

**Note by the Secretariat**

*Summary*

The present note describes a proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It is proposed that the information for the review process would be collected mainly from the following sources: (a) voluntary reports by the Member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations and forest-related processes; and (b) meetings of the ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests and possible informal meetings. The note also contains a proposal for the preparation of documentation to facilitate the review at the fifth session of the Forum.

* E/CN.18/2004/1.

04-25771 (E) 240304

# Contents


| | | Paragraphs | Page |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 1–5 | 3 |
| II. | Background information | 6–11 | 4 |
| III. | Consideration of a process to facilitate the review | 12–23 | 5 |
| IV. | Matters for consideration at the fourth session of the UNFF | 24 | 8 |
| Annexes | | | |
| I. | Principal functions of the international arrangement on forests | | 10 |
| II. | Specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests | | 11 |

# I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2000/35, established the United Nations Forum on Forests and also invited heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of other relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a collaborative partnership on forests to support the work of the Forum. It decided that the main objective of this international arrangement on forests was to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. To achieve this objective, the Council decided that the international arrangement on forests would perform six principal functions (see annex I). It also decided, inter alia, that the effectiveness of the arrangement would be reviewed after five years and that the review would also address the institutional framework of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including its position within the United Nations system.

2. At its second session, the Forum, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, decided, in its resolution 2/3, that the review of the international arrangement on forests would be carried out in the context of the principal functions of the arrangement. It also identified specific criteria, in relation to each of the principal functions, for the assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement. The specific criteria are attached as annex II to the present paper.

3. In resolution 2/3, the Forum invited its secretariat, in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to identify and propose at its fourth session a process to facilitate the carrying out of the review on the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session. Accordingly, the present proposal has been prepared by the secretariat, in conjunction with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

4. On 23 June 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/270 B on the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. In the resolution, the Assembly stressed the importance of regular review; and requested, in paragraph 46, each functional commission to examine its methods of work in order better to pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. Functional commissions are expected to report to the Economic and Social Council no later than 2005 on the outcome of this examination. In responding to the Council's request, the United Nations Forum on Forests may draw upon the review of the effectiveness carried out at its fifth session.

5. The Council, in its decision 2003/299, approved the establishment of three ad hoc expert groups for the Forum: one on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting; a second on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and a third, on consideration, with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The present note indicates how the work of the ad hoc expert groups relates to the review process.

# II. Background information

## A. Decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests related to the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests

6. In resolution 2/3, the Forum decided that the review would:

(a) Take into account specifically the work of the Forum and its members and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in facilitating implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF);

(b) Take into consideration, inter alia, the efforts of countries to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action, the outputs of the ad hoc expert groups, intersessional meetings and country-led and organization-led initiatives and forest-related work sponsored and/or undertaken by the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(c) Draw on voluntary reports from countries, organizations and processes and other outcomes of its sessions.

7. In resolution 2/3, the Forum also invited:

(a) Its secretariat, in cooperation with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and taking into account the work of the ad hoc expert groups, to gather baseline information relevant to the specific criteria;

(b) Countries to voluntarily provide quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, in a timely fashion, for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session;

(c) The Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members, as well as forest-related processes, to voluntarily provide quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, relevant to themselves, in a timely fashion, for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session;

(d) Major groups to voluntarily present, at the multi-stakeholder dialogue at its fifth session, quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, relevant to themselves.

## B. Gathering of baseline information

8. In response to the invitation to gather baseline information, the secretariat has begun to compile information against each of the specific criteria. It has drawn upon the reports of the Secretary-General for past sessions; reports of the sessions themselves; voluntary national reports to the Forum; Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework reports and reports of major groups to sessions of the Forum; findings of country-led initiatives in support of the Forum; information on forests contained in country reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development; and other sources of information. The secretariat has also taken account of the work of the Forum's ad hoc expert groups on monitoring, assessment and reporting (see

E/CN.18/2004/2) and on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (see E/CN.18/2004/3), as well as the preparations for the ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (see E/CN.18/2004/6).

### C. Other review processes

9. To assist in the preparation of the present note, the secretariat took note of and collected information on the review processes undertaken by some intergovernmental organizations and functional commissions of the United Nations, namely the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

10. Some common features emerge from these review processes:

(a) A major review is a lengthy and potentially complex process; in the cases looked at, preparatory work was done over a period of from 18 to 27 months;

(b) Each review process involved considerable consultation during a preparatory phase. Often this was achieved by holding a series of informal and formal (preparatory committee) meetings at subregional, regional and international levels, involving countries, organizations, major groups and other stakeholders, and often culminating in a large conference or preparatory meeting several months before a special session of the General Assembly;

(c) Voluntary reports from countries formed a major input to the review process. These covered matters such as progress in implementation, lessons learned and critical areas of concern.

11. The proposed process to facilitate the review has many of the same elements, but on a more modest scale, reflecting the time and resources available.

## III. Consideration of a process to facilitate the review

### A. Main elements and sources of information for the process to facilitate the review

12. Based on the analysis of other review processes and the requirements set out in the resolutions referred to earlier in this present note, it is proposed that the main elements of a process to facilitate the review consist of:

(a) Submission of voluntary reports by countries, major groups and relevant organizations and processes;

(b) Preparations for and the meeting of the ad hoc expert group on consideration, with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests;

(c) Possible informal meetings;

(d) Preparation of documentation for the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

These elements are discussed further in the following paragraphs.

## B. Voluntary reports

13. The voluntary reports would be intended to provide information against the specific criteria related to the six principal functions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Voluntary reports submitted to the Forum at its second, third and fourth sessions, as well as views submitted in response to Economic and Social Council decision 2003/299, address the first function: implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting noted that there were gaps in the information available from country reporting and identified ways by which additional information could be gathered so as to get as comprehensive a view as possible on countries' implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The following proposal is broadly consistent with the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group. Additional information on the criteria related to the other five principal functions of the Forum would need to be collected from the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and forest-related processes to supplement the baseline information collected by the secretariat of the Forum.

14. It is proposed that voluntary reports submitted to the Forum at its fifth session by the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations and processes would be structured according to the agreed specific criteria for the review. These reports would:

(a) Provide additional or new information (not already contained in earlier voluntary reports to the United Nations Forum on Forests or the Commission on Sustainable Development) on progress and lessons learned related to implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, decisions and resolutions taken by the Forum (in reference to the first function of the Forum);

(b) Referring to the compilation of baseline information, provide new and additional information related to the specific criteria of the final five of the six principal functions;

(c) Provide quantifiable benchmarks.

## C. Ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests

15. The Economic and Social Council, in decision 2003/299 of 25 July 2003, established the ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The report of the meeting of the expert group, which will be held in New York from 6 to 10 September 2004, will be submitted to the Forum at its fifth session to address the consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests, and to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

16. As part of the preparations for the meeting of the above-mentioned ad hoc expert group, the member States and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have been invited to submit their views on the progress made and catalysts

and obstacles encountered by member States of the United Nations Forum on Forests and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the decisions and resolutions of sessions of the Forum. In addition, one of the tasks of the ad hoc expert group is to consider other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests, inter alia, the efforts of countries to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action, other expert groups, country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum and previous relevant initiatives, and forest-related work undertaken by the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. All relevant information from the ad hoc expert group would be used for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness.

## D. Possible informal meetings

17. The convening of informal meetings held at the subregional, regional and global levels would allow countries, international and regional organizations, processes, partnerships and major groups, among others, to have an opportunity to discuss progress in carrying out the principal functions of the international arrangement on forests and to provide an opportunity to examine lessons learned, success stories and obstacles and constraints encountered. Furthermore, they would offer participants an opportunity to touch upon critical areas of concern and identify priorities for action.

18. Options for meetings could include country-led and organization-led initiatives, workshops and informal consultations, as well as an agenda item on the review process in meetings already planned. Some member States may wish to organize such meetings. It may also be noted that the ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting has recommended for the consideration of the United Nations Forum on Forests that the Forum invite the regional forestry commissions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to take the opportunity to hold discussions on the relationship between regional priorities and the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, in order to contribute to the overall assessment to be done at the fifth session of the Forum.

## E. Preparations of documentation to facilitate the review at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

19. The review process would include the drafting of a synthesis report on the work of the international arrangement on forests. It could be structured along the six principal functions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It would be based on the voluntary reports received from member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and processes; the compilation of baseline information; inputs and results of the ad hoc expert groups; information related to a review of methods of work; results of informal meetings held in conjunction with preparations for the review; other relevant information about the work of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and major groups; reports of country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum; and information on other supporting elements of the international arrangements on

forests, such as reports submitted by the major groups concerning implementation of the functions and the proposed benchmarks relative to themselves prepared for the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

## F. The review at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

20. The Forum's multi-year programme of work agreed upon at the first session, in resolution 1/1, includes three items for consideration at the fifth session of the Forum, as follows:

(a) Review of progress and consideration of future actions;

(b) Consideration, with a view to making recommendations, of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests;

(c) Review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

The process proposed in the present paper would contribute to the first and third items.

21. The review referred to in the first item is seen as focusing on (a) progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and (b) progress towards sustainable forest management (as consistent with the Forum's monitoring, assessment and reporting function defined in resolution 1/1). Based upon the review of progress both in implementation and towards sustainable forest management, the Forum would consider future actions to facilitate further progress in these areas. The process proposed in the present note would contribute information related to the review of progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting has proposed, for the consideration of the Forum at its fourth session, a way to assess progress towards sustainable forest management at the fifth session (see E/CN.18/2004/2).

22. The review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests would concern the arrangement's effectiveness in carrying out all six of its functions.

23. The results of the discussions on these first and third items would be taken into consideration, along with the recommendations of the related ad hoc expert group, in the deliberations on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. This would also ensure that the review takes account of the need to address the institutional framework of the Forum, including its position in the United Nations system, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35.

# IV. Matters for consideration at the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

24. At its fourth session, the Forum may wish to consider the following process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session:

(a) Distribution to the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and forest-related processes, of the following documents by 15 August 2004:

(i) Suggested formats for reporting, with accompanying guidelines;

(ii) Compilation of baseline information relevant to the specific criteria that has been prepared by the secretariat of the Forum, in accordance with its resolution 2/3;

(iii) Background note on the identification of quantifiable benchmarks against the specific criteria, which would outline the scope of the exercise and suggest possible units of measurement for quantifiable benchmarks;

(b) Submission of voluntary reports by the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and forest-related processes by 29 October 2004. These reports would include:

(i) Provision of additional and new information on progress made on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

(ii) New, additional and/or amended information further to the compiled baseline information;

(iii) Quantifiable benchmarks from member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and forest-related processes in accordance with Forum resolution 2/3;

(c) Convening of informal meetings during the second half of 2004, involving the participation of the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and processes and aimed at providing a perspective on:

(i) Progress in carrying out the principal functions of the international arrangement on forests as against the specific criteria for the assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests;

(ii) Lessons learned, success stories, obstacles and constraints encountered in promoting sustainable forest management in the regional context;

(iii) Critical areas of concern, together with possible future challenges and priorities for action;

(d) Preparation of documentation for the review of the effectiveness at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including:

(i) A synthesis report on the work of the Forum, based on: the voluntary reports (including benchmarks) received; the compilation of baseline information; inputs to and results of the ad hoc expert groups; information related to a review of methods of work; results of informal meetings held in conjunction with preparations for the review, and other relevant information about the work of the Forum and the international arrangement on forests; the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; and information from country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum;

(ii) Reports from the major groups concerning implementation of the functions and the proposed benchmarks relative to themselves.

# Annex I

## Principal functions of the international arrangement on forests*

(a) Facilitate and promote the implementation of Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action, as well as other actions that may be agreed upon, including through national forest programmes and other integrated programmes relevant to forests; catalyse, mobilize and generate financial resources; and mobilize and channel technical and scientific resources to this end, including by taking steps towards the broadening and development of mechanisms and/or further initiatives to enhance international cooperation;

(b) Provide a forum for continued policy development and dialogue among Governments, which would involve international organizations and other interested parties, including major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, to foster a common understanding on sustainable forest management and to address forest issues and emerging areas of priority concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner;

(c) Enhance cooperation, as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, as well as contribute to synergies among them, including coordination among donors;

(d) Foster international cooperation, including North-South and public-private partnerships, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation at the national, regional and global levels;

(e) Monitor and assess progress at the national, regional and global levels through reporting by Governments, as well as by regional and international organizations, institutions and instruments, and on this basis consider future actions needed;

(f) Strengthening political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests through ministerial engagement; developing ways to liaise with the governing bodies of international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments; and the promotion of action-oriented dialogue and policy formulation related to forests.

* From Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35.

# Annex II

## Specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests[a]

"*The United Nations Forum on Forests*,

...

"*Decides* that the specific criteria for the assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests are the following:

(a) Implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action:

"(i) The extent to which countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other actors have made progress in implementing the relevant IPF/IFF proposals for action;

"(ii) The extent to which countries have developed and started to implement national forest programmes or equivalent processes;

"(iii) The extent to which participation of stakeholders in those programmes and processes has been enhanced;

"(iv) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has facilitated and promoted countries' implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, focusing on the means of implementation (finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building) as well as the relevant common items;

"(v) The extent to which countries have made progress in assessing the IPF/IFF proposals for action in order to determine their relevance in their national context;

"(b) Forum for continued policy development and dialogue:

"(i) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests, including, inter alia, Forum sessions, intersessional work and the multi-stakeholder dialogue, and the related work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members, as well as country- and organization-led initiatives, have enhanced forest policy development and dialogue;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has worked in a transparent and participatory manner, including through the involvement of major groups;

"(iii) The extent to which the Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have responded to the guidance of the Forum;

"(iv) The extent to which progress has been made in reaching a common understanding of forest-related concepts, terminology and definitions;

"(c) Cooperation and policy and programme coordination:

---

[a] From resolution 2/3 adopted at the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, see *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 22* (E/2002/42), chap. II.B.

"(i) The extent to which partnerships relevant to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action have been advanced;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has facilitated and promoted coordination and cooperation among other forest-related organizations, instruments and processes;

"(d) International cooperation:

"(i) The extent to which the international community, including bilateral and multilateral donors and organizations, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and international and regional processes, have facilitated the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, inter alia, through the provision of financial, technical and scientific resources and capacity-building;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has promoted efforts by the international community to facilitate the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action through, in particular, North-South cooperation and public-private partnerships, as well as through South-South and North-North cooperation;

"(e) Monitoring and assessing progress through reporting:

"(i) The extent to which countries, regions, organizations and processes respond to the call from Forum and Collaborative Partnership on Forests members for voluntary reports, with a focus on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

"(ii) The extent to which trends, lessons learned, emerging issues and actions are identified and become apparent through those voluntary reports;

"(iii) The extent to which major groups have been encouraged to participate in developing voluntary reports;

"(iv) The extent to which Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have worked to strengthen countries' abilities to monitor, assess and report progress in the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action;

"(v) The extent to which Forum sessions provide opportunities to voluntarily report progress and lessons learned;

"(vi) The extent to which countries make progress in monitoring, assessment and reporting through, inter alia, applying criteria and indicator processes or similar tools in their efforts to achieve sustainable forest management;

"(f) Strengthening political commitment:

"(i) The extent to which high-level engagement furthers political commitment to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action by countries;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests succeeds in enhancing the positioning of forests on the international agenda;

....."

# E/CN.18/2004/13

Readex
Fiche

United Nations E/CN.18/2004/13

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 March 2004

Original: English

**United Nations Forum on Forests**
**Fourth session**
Geneva, 3-14 May 2004
Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*
**Common items for each session: enhanced cooperation**

## Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination

### Note by the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The United Nations Forum on Forests and its secretariat actively pursue a wide range of cooperation and coordination in order to effectively promote and implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and achieve sustainable management of forests. The present report provides an outline of efforts made by the United Nations Forum on Forests to engage other relevant United Nations bodies, international instruments and mechanisms, intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders in increased collaboration and coordination resulting in many tangible advances in consensus-building and coordinated action. It also highlights new and emerging areas where the participation of the United Nations Forum on Forests will be crucial for ensuring that political commitment to forest issues is strengthened. As the international community moves further towards greater collaboration and coordination on sustainable forest management, a number of new opportunities are arising that the United Nations Forum on Forests could and should seize.

* E/CN.18/2004/1.

04-26254 (E) 290304

# Contents


| | Paragraphs | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. Introduction | 1 | 3 |
| II. Enhanced cooperation | 2–7 | 3 |
| A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests | 2–3 | 3 |
| B. Stakeholders | 4 | 3 |
| C. Country-led initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests and other relevant meetings | 5 | 4 |
| D. Partnerships and processes | 6–7 | 4 |
| III. Enhanced policy and programme coordination | 8–29 | 5 |
| A. Meeting intergovernmental goals and targets | 8–12 | 5 |
| B. The Economic and Social Council: implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields | 13 | 6 |
| C. Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council | 14 | 6 |
| D. Regional bodies | 15–17 | 6 |
| E. International instruments and mechanisms relevant to the forest sector | 18–29 | 7 |
| 1. Instruments | 19–27 | 7 |
| (a) Convention on Biological Diversity | 19–21 | 7 |
| (b) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change | 22 | 8 |
| (c) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa | 23–24 | 8 |
| (d) Other multilateral environmental agreements | 25 | 9 |
| (e) Global Environment Facility | 26 | 9 |
| (f) International Tropical Timber Agreement | 27 | 9 |
| 2. Other bodies and mechanisms | 28–29 | 9 |
| (a) Governing bodies of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests | 28 | 9 |
| (b) World Trade Organization | 29 | 10 |
| IV. Conclusions | 30–33 | 10 |
| V. Points for discussion | 34 | 11 |

# I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of resolution 1/1,[1] the United Nations Forum on Forests decided, inter alia, to address enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination at each session. Many actions related to that function take place within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and are described in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1). The present note underscores how important it is for the United Nations Forum on Forests to work closely with other intergovernmental bodies, international and regional processes, organizations, institutions and instruments to raise the profile of forests and their role in addressing broader development concerns; enhance linkages with other sectors; strengthen ties with regional bodies; and facilitate partnerships with and among major groups.

# II. Enhanced cooperation

## A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests

2. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat is an active participant in this collaborative partnership, which was established in 2001 to support the work of the Forum and to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues among its members. It contributes to the joint activities of the partnership and conveys the results of the work of the Forum to the governing bodies and other meetings of the partners. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests consists of 14 international organizations, institutions and secretariats,[2] has been chaired by FAO and supported by the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat. Terms of reference and working modalities are described in the latest version (revised, June 2003) of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Policy Document.[3]

3. The CPF Framework 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1) highlights joint Collaborative Partnership on Forests initiatives, such as the Sourcebook on Funding for Sustainable Forest Management,[3] and work on streamlining forest-related reporting and on harmonizing forest-related definitions. It also describes other joint activities of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members in support of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and enhanced cooperation and coordination on forest-related issues, including support given to intersessional activities, such as Ad Hoc Expert Groups and country/organization-led initiatives. While the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests receive guidance from the United Nations Forum on Forests, each takes direction from and is accountable to its own governing body. In addition, FAO, UNEP and ITTO second staff to the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat.

## B. Stakeholders

4. Stakeholders provide important perspectives on the implementation of intergovernmental agreements and they are well placed to identify emerging issues and share innovative ideas. The United Nations Forum on Forests holds a multi-stakeholder dialogue at each of its sessions and invites representatives of the nine major groups to contribute discussion papers. At the same time, lack of financial and

human resources frequently constitutes a bottleneck for major groups to participate in the Forum and related activities. Major groups participated in the meetings of the ad hoc expert groups established in support of the work of the Forum, in which their participation was particularly effective in focusing attention on action that the United Nations Forum on Forests could take to support stakeholder efforts to advance sustainable forest management. The secretariat of the Forum has maintained close contacts with the focal points of all major groups and has also used every opportunity during meetings and conferences it has attended to inform major groups about the work and aim of the Forum as well as to explore how their engagement in the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests can become more purposeful and effective.

## C. Country-led initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests and other relevant meetings

5. The country- and organization-led initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests provide an opportunity for experts to consider matters prior to the sessions of the Forum, thereby increasing the understanding of the issues and thus facilitating discussions. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat provides input and advice to all initiatives explicitly held in support of the Forum. The Global Workshop on Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and Capacity-Building for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Brazzaville; the workshop on lessons learned on sustainable forest management in Africa, held in Nairobi; and the country-led initiative on decentralization, federal systems in forestry and national forest programmes, held in Interlaken, Switzerland, are all examples of the usefulness of that kind of initiative in gathering a large number of country representatives, major groups and relevant organizations, disseminating information and lessons learned, as well as in providing more informal settings for discussions and exploring new and emerging forest-related issues. An additional meeting of particular relevance to the Forum at its fourth session was the Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management held in Cebu City, Philippines. Outcomes of the country-led initiatives and other relevant meetings will be available at the current session to inform deliberations.

## D. Partnerships and processes

6. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, confirmed the importance of partnerships to achieve sustainable forest management. Since that Summit, several additional collaborative arrangements have been established. Key partnerships that specifically address forests include the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Asia Forest Partnership, the International Model Forest Network, and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat supports and in some cases participates in those efforts.

7. The Forum secretariat is also compiling information on regional initiatives and processes, such as the regional and international processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, of which there are currently nine, to identify potential synergies and collaboration. South-South and North-South partnerships

will also be examined, along with strengths and weaknesses in regional cooperation so that ways to replicate successful examples can be identified.

# III. Enhanced policy and programme coordination

## A. Meeting intergovernmental goals and targets

8. The United Nations Forum on Forests has several opportunities to relay to the international community how forests can contribute to broader development concerns both now and in the future. In its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, the General Assembly decided that organizations and bodies of the United Nations system should incorporate the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits into their programmes of work. Recent summits and conferences most relevant to the United Nations Forum on Forests are the Millennium Summit (New York, September 2000); the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August-September 2002); and the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, March 2002).

9. When the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted as the outcome of the Millennium Summit in resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, the General Assembly resolved to intensify efforts related to the sustainable management of forests. As the United Nations body established by the Economic and Social Council to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests is in a unique position to take a lead in promoting the role of forests in implementing the Millennium Declaration and contribute to achieving the goals related to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

10. The Secretary-General was also requested to review, in 2005, progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration and to prepare a report to be submitted for review to the General Assembly. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly also considered convening a high-level plenary meeting during its sixtieth session to further review implementation.

11. In its resolution 57/253 of 20 December 2002, the General Assembly recognized the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a framework for the future work of all United Nations bodies. It endorsed the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and adopted sustainable development as a key element in all United Nations activities and urged timely implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the Summit.

12. The General Assembly in its resolution 58/230 of 23 December 2003 also highlighted the importance of implementing the Monterrey Consensus to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, the effective use of national resources, trade, official development assistance for technical cooperation, and foreign direct investment are critical to creating a macroeconomic environment for supporting sustainable forest management. The United Nations Forum on Forests Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies can be seen as a first step towards addressing many of those issues as they relate to forests both at the national and international levels.

## B. The Economic and Social Council: implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

13. When the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/270 B on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, it also examined the role of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. The General Assembly requested that the methods of work be examined by each functional commission and relevant subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly also requested that the outcome of that examination be submitted to the Council no later than 2005. The exercise coincides with the United Nations Forum on Forests review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, thus providing an opportunity to respond to the request.

## C. Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council

14. As the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council continue to seek ways to further link the work of its subsidiary and related bodies, interaction with other functional commissions and United Nations bodies, particularly with the Commission on Sustainable Development, will become increasingly important for the United Nations Forum on Forests and its secretariat. For example, the participation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the deliberations of the Forum at the current session on indigenous forest-related issues is highly relevant.

## D. Regional bodies

15. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has encouraged and engaged regional bodies as well as drawn more heavily upon their knowledge and expertise for enhanced regional cooperation and coordination on the forest sector. They are becoming increasingly important in assisting countries to achieve sustainable forest management. At the third session, various regional institutions, bodies and processes contributed to discussions, and showcased lessons learned. At the fourth session, the trend of incorporating regional perspectives will continue, primarily through holding panels on Africa and small island developing States as part of the session.

16. Six Regional Forestry Commissions operate under the auspices of FAO: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, the Near East, and North America. Efforts are being made to strengthen the links between these commissions and the United Nations Forum on Forests. In March 2003, the FAO Committee on Forestry recommended that the Regional Forestry Commissions facilitate the flow of information between the United Nations Forum on Forests and countries and help to increase awareness of the importance of implementing IPF/IFF proposals for action.[4] In response, FAO organized workshops in conjunction with regional forestry commission meetings to discuss the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals of action. The results of the meetings on the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions will be presented to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fourth

session during the panels on implementation in Africa, Africa Day, and implementation in Small Island Developing States, Small Island Developing States Day, respectively.

17. The United Nations regional commissions could also bring their expertise to the table in the same way. While the Economic Commission for Europe is the only one that currently deals specifically with forests and timber, others have programmes on natural resource use, governance, renewable energy and sustainable development in the context of human settlements — areas all relevant to forests. Moreover, the newly established Regional Committees on Sustainable Development align their work with the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development that will include forests on its agenda during its 2012/2013 cycle.

## E. International instruments and mechanisms relevant to the forest sector

18. Consistent with United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 1/1, the Forum, through its secretariat, has sought to increase cooperation and coordination as well as to promote synergies with relevant international instruments. The Forum secretariat has made every effort to participate in and make substantive contributions to many of the meetings and workshops relevant to forests organized by different instruments and mechanisms. The secretariat's increased efforts to play an active role have resulted in growing recognition and consideration of sustainable forest management principles in the deliberations of those instruments and mechanisms. Cooperation, coordination and the creation of synergies will be increasingly important to further promote the consideration of sustainable forest management.

### 1. Instruments

#### (a) Convention on Biological Diversity

19. Both the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity recognize that their forest-related work is mutually supportive, and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Coordinator and Head of the United Nations Forum on Forests are collaborating on issues of common interest. Convention on Biological Diversity decision VI/22 on forest biological diversity,[5] the Ministerial Declaration and Message from the United Nations Forum on Forests to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (see Forum resolution 2/1),[6] and Forum resolution 3/4[7] reflect the need for this collaborative arrangement.

20. In resolution 4/4, the United Nations Forum on Forests also invited member States and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to submit their views on three topics relevant to the United Nations Forum on Forests and Convention on Biological Diversity collaboration for discussion at its fourth session: (a) the relationship between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management; (b) the management, sustainable use and benefit-sharing of forest biological diversity; and (c) the relationship between IPF/IFF proposals for action and the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity. To date, the

views of Member States and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have not yet been received by the Forum secretariat. However, the secretariat will introduce these views in an oral report to the Forum at its fourth session and the results of the discussions at the session are to be provided to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity for their information

21. A meeting of experts hosted by the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat in July 2003 concluded that sustainable forest management "can be considered as a means of applying the ecosystem approach to forests".[8] In addition, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity conducted a preliminary assessment of the links between IPF/IFF proposals for action and the Convention on Biological Diversity expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, which was made available at the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. At its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties took note of this assessment and invited the Coordinator and Head of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and others, to provide any further views on the assessment.

### (b) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

22. The ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Milan, Italy, from 1 to 12 December 2003, and its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, tackled many forest-related items, including rules guiding afforestation and reforestation under the Clean Development Mechanism. The good practice guidance for land use, land-use change and forestry, developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, was also considered as well as a format to report greenhouse gas emissions and removal by sinks under the convention. In view of the many issues on the agenda of the ninth Conference of the Parties that were relevant to forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat organized a side event on Collaborative Partnership on Forests activities during the session.

### (c) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

23. The sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification met in Havana, Cuba, from 25 August to 5 September 2003. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat highlighted the links between forests and efforts to combat desertification and poverty. It also noted synergies between the United Nations Forum on Forests and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration with other conventions, international organizations, institutions and agencies through continued participation in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

24. At its sixth session, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in collaboration with the Coordinator and Head of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, to address the needs of low forest cover countries, including by developing a joint approach on forests and, inter alia, to cooperate with the Tehran process and its secretariat to strengthen

the capacity of low forest cover countries to combat desertification, land degradation and deforestation. The United Nations Forum on Forests specifically addressed the issues of low forest cover countries and the Tehran process during the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. The governing bodies of FAO and UNEP have also responded to the call to cooperate with the Tehran process.

**(d) Other multilateral environmental agreements**

25. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has continued to exchange information with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora on issues of common concern and is working with the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to support regional initiatives such as the Antigua Guatemala convention for the sustainable management of mangrove forests (see E/CN.18/2003/11).

**(e) Global Environment Facility**

26. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides substantial funding to the forest sector through its programme on biological diversity. As of June 2003, GEF committed more than US$ 777 million for forest-related projects and that funding leveraged nearly US$ 2 billion from partners. GEF has also the potential to enhance financial support to sustainable forest management under its new Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management. To this end, the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies recommended (see E/CN.18/2004/5) that the United Nations Forum on Forests invite GEF to seek the advice of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on developing the sustainable forest management component of the sustainable land management focal area.

**(f) International Tropical Timber Agreement**

27. The International Tropical Timber Council, the governing body of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), held its thirty-fifth session in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2003, followed by the second preparatory committee meeting for negotiation of the successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement 1994. The current Agreement is scheduled to expire on 31 December 2006. Two working group sessions and two preparatory committee meetings identified issues and clarified the scope, funding mechanisms, institutional set-up, and emerging issues to be addressed in the successor agreement. The next step is the conference on the negotiations, which will take place under the aegis of UNCTAD from 26 to 30 July 2004 in Geneva.

**2. Other bodies and mechanisms**

**(a) Governing bodies of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests**

28. Many of the governing bodies of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are increasingly calling for greater focus on sustainable forest management in their activities and for support to the United Nations Forum on Forests and the work of the partnership. Many of the outcomes of, for example, the FAO Committee on Forestry, the UNEP Governing Council, ITTC, as well as many

of the Conferences of the Parties mentioned above, explicitly support enhanced policy and programme coordination. Those forums are also, in many instances, well placed to assist in country implementation. For example, the FAO National Forest Programme Facility supports development and implementation of national forest programmes that embrace cross-sectoral and participatory approaches.

**(b) World Trade Organization**

29. The Doha Ministerial Declaration adopted in November 2001 called for enhancing ways in which trade and the environment can be mutually supportive and encouraged cooperation between the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international organizations. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has been participating in the dialogue through the Committee on Trade and Environment and in a side event organized during the fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003. The work with WTO is particularly relevant to paragraph 45 (c) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[9] concerning illegal international trade in forest products and paragraph 45 (f) which calls for international cooperation on issues tied to sustainable forest management, including trade.

# IV. Conclusions

30. **The United Nations Forum on Forests, its secretariat, other intergovernmental organizations, institutions and processes, as well as a wide variety of stakeholders, have increasingly been finding opportunities to enhance collaboration and coordination on forest issues. These efforts have culminated in the many activities outlined in the present note and increased understanding of the importance of sustainable forest management and the role of forests in addressing broader development goals, sustainable development and other cross-cutting issues relevant to forests.**

31. **To the United Nations Forum on Forests and the international forest community, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests remains a valuable mechanism for United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, convention secretariats and other stakeholders, to address common concerns, harmonize and streamline reporting, avoid duplication and promote increased cooperation and collaboration in a number of projects and programmes.**

32. **Country- and organization-led initiatives continue to provide important support to the United Nations Forum on Forests by helping to build consensus on issues prior to their discussion at sessions. Similarly, regional and international partnerships among Governments and stakeholders are transforming proposals into action on the ground.**

33. **As the international community places greater emphasis on a holistic and coordinated approach to development, it will be important for the United Nations Forum on Forests to ensure that the use of forests for development and the effects on forests of other activities, are well understood. By engaging in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of other major summits and conferences, the United Nations Forum on Forests can be instrumental in keeping forests as an integral part of the development agenda. In this respect, there is a need to further enhance communication between the**

**United Nations Forum on Forests and other relevant bodies and processes, and to further strengthen collaboration on common priorities.**

## V. Points for discussion

34. The United Nations Forum on Forests may wish to:

(a) Consider the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the relationship between poverty eradication and forests in its future work, including as part of the review on the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session;

(b) Invite the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to prepare a contribution on the role of forests in implementing the Millennium Declaration as part of the Secretary-General's comprehensive review;

(c) Consider and redirect its work in relation to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including the links between forests and other sectors, as well as invite newly established relevant partnerships to contribute to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests;

(d) Assess the impacts of implementing the Monterrey Consensus on sustainable forest management and how these changes affect the relationship between forests and poverty;

(e) Prepare a message to the eighth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity conveying the results of deliberations on the three topics on which views were sought;

(f) Acknowledge the contribution of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in streamlining forest-related reporting and further invite them to continue their joint efforts, make information accessible on sources of funding sustainable forest management, and harmonize forest-related definitions;

(g) Consider ways and means to provide more opportunities for stakeholders to participate in its work, such as through ad hoc expert groups and country-led initiatives;

(h) Encourage the increased participation of regional bodies, institutions and processes, such as the regional commissions and FAO Forestry Commissions, to contribute more directly to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

*Notes*

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1-E/CN.18/2001/3/Rev.1), part two, chap. I, sect. B.

[2] Collaborative Partnership on Forests members: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO); secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF); secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); World Bank; World Conservation Union (IUCN).

[3] See the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat web site: www.un.org/esa/forests.

[4] For the report on the sixteenth session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO-2003/REP), see: www.fao.org/DOCREP/MEETING/007/Y9203E/Y9203E00.HTM.

[5] See: www.biodiv.org.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 42* (E/2002/42-E/CN.18/2002/14), chap. I, sect. B.

[7] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 42* (E/2003/42-E/CN.18/2003/13), chap. I, sect. C.

[8] For the final report of the meeting, see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/4.

[9] See *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.